

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with H. James Voeller, #48,015, on 11/3/10.

2. The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

3. **Claim 13** has been **amended** as follows:

CLAIM 13. (currently amended) A pipe coupling comprising a first pipe end-portion provided with an external thread, a second pipe end-portion, a nut which is rotatably mounted on the second pipe end-portion and can be screwed on the external thread of the first pipe end-portion, and a locking device for selectively locking against relative rotation the nut and the first pipe end-portion provided with the external thread, the locking device being mounted on the second pipe end-portion and comprising:

- a coupling component for coupling with an ~~the~~ engagement formation formed on the first pipe end-portion distant from the external thread,

- a stop component for common rotation with a body carried by the nut ~~second component~~, the body connected for common rotation with the nut ~~second component~~, and
- disconnectable coupling means between the coupling component and the stop component,

wherein the disconnectable coupling means comprises a ratchet allowing relative rotation in the direction of unscrewing when a torque at least indirectly applied to the coupling component and the stop component with respect to one another overcomes a predetermined elastic resistance, the torque between the coupling component and the stop component resulting from a torque applied between the first pipe end-portion ~~component~~ and the body.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE:

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

With regard to claim 1, the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a screw coupling with first and second components rotatable in relation to one another during screwing and unscrewing, the first component comprising a first thread and a rotating engagement formation distant from the first thread where the screw coupling includes a locking device mounted on the second component and comprising: a coupling component for coupling with the engagement formation, a stop component connected for common rotation with a body carried by and connected for common rotation with the second component, and disconnectable coupling means between the coupling component and the stop component, wherein the disconnectable coupling means comprises a ratchet allowing relative rotation in the direction of unscrewing when a

torque at least indirectly applied to the coupling component and the stop component with respect to one another overcomes a predetermined elastic resistance, the torque between the coupling component and the stop component resulting from a torque applied between the first component and the body.

With regard to claim 13, the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a pipe coupling having a first pipe end-portion provided with an external thread, a second pipe end-portion, a nut rotatably mounted on the second pipe end-portion and which can be screwed on the external thread of the first pipe end-portion, and a locking device for selectively locking against relative rotation the nut and the first pipe end-portion, the locking device being mounted on the second pipe end-portion and comprising: a coupling component for coupling with an engagement formation formed on the first pipe end-portion distant from the external thread, a stop component for common rotation with a body carried by the nut, the body connected for common rotation with the nut, and disconnectable coupling means between the coupling component and the stop component, wherein the disconnectable coupling means comprises a ratchet allowing relative rotation in the direction of unscrewing when a torque at least indirectly applied to the coupling component and the stop component with respect to one another overcomes a predetermined elastic resistance, the torque between the coupling component and the stop component resulting from a torque applied between the first pipe end-portion and the body.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

CONCLUSION:

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fannie Kee whose telephone number is (571) 272-1820. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571) 272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/AARON DUNWOODY/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679

/F. K./
Examiner, Art Unit 3679
November 3, 2010